**Structured Small Group Program**

**Component #1: Needs, Goals, Objectives**

**Title of your Group Program: Life is Sweeter With a Friend**

1. **Friendships help individuals adjust to changing environments and deal in a productive manner with the stresses of life. Some children have difficulty developing and maintaining friendships. Friendships improve high school retention rates and delinquency rates. In order to promote the formation of social networks to improve student retention and performance, a social skills focus group is proposed. According to a study conducted using 1,278 middle school students grades 6-8, students with high academically achieving friends are more likely to achieve academically (Veronneau, 2011, page 100). Inversely, students who display antisocial behaviors have those behaviors reinforced though assortative pairing. These deviant behaviors begin to fully develop by the end of middle school. Therefore, it is never too early for social skills intervention (Veronneau, 2011, page 100).**

**Social skills are a normative need. Many students casually pick up interpersonal skills throughout their daily lives, but occasionally, some students do not. In order to identify students with deficiencies in social skills, data will be collected from school administrators, teachers, and parents. Students with social skills deficiencies are more likely to experience difficulties with peers, parents and teachers. Students with poor social skills often experience peer rejection and see higher cases of school violence. (NASP, 2002). When using modeling and role playing techniques with male urban high school students with high delinquency rates, tardiness and delinquency rates were considerably lower one year after the termination of therapy (Sarason, 1981, page 908). Students with social skills deficiencies attend college at a lower rate than their peers. Sarason’s social skills therapy group saw a 20% increase in college admissions than those with social skills deficiencies who did not seek therapy at the urban school (Sarason, 1981, page 915).**

**When students are identified, social skills group therapy sessions will be conducted with other students displaying similar difficulties. These sessions will be available to a preselected, closed group in order to build trust and cohesion. Students who are identified as most severe by discipline records, and teachers and parent surveys will receive the most social skills sessions. The same data will again be gathered one year after the group therapy sessions are underway. The data sources used for assessing student needs are teacher social skills data collection took, school discipline reports and parent social skills data collection tools. These data sources will be analyzed to determine where the teachers find students weakest in classroom behavior, discussion of feelings, interaction with classmates and conflict resolution. The parental data will be used to identify worrisome social behaviors that present themselves outside of the classroom. The school discipline reports will be used to identify students who have trouble resolving conflict with other students. Students who have disagreements with other students and are defiant toward teachers will be identified as needing social skills evaluation.**

<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/ccp/49/6/908.pdf>

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/socialskills_fs.aspx>

<http://harborhaven.com/Social%20Skills%20Survey%202009%20wo.pdf>

<http://jea.sagepub.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/content/31/1/99.full.pdf+html>

**Population:**

The populations are Schuylkill Valley High School students, grades 9-10 who have been identified through data collection driven by their teachers, parents and school administrators for deficiencies in social skills. These deficiencies could include difficulties with conflict resolution, development of interpersonal relationships, and social norms with group dynamics.

**Recruitment and Screening:**

Data will be collected from teacher surveys, parental surveys and school discipline records to determine an eligible pool of students for social skills group sessions. After identifying the students in need through data collection, I will call each student individually into my office during their study halls or homeroom periods. I will discuss the importance of social skills in today’s society. I will discuss the careers that are available to people with good social skills. After explaining why social skills are important, I will interview the students. Each student will identify which area they believe could best improve their social skills. After collecting data from the identified students, I will refer them to the appropriate social skills groups: conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships and appropriate group behaviors.

**Group Structure:**

This psycholeducational cognitive behavioral therapy group will begin meeting on the first Tuesday of the second quarter of school and last through the fourth quarter. The group will conduct one session per week on Tuesdays for forty five minutes. The sessions will be conducted from 2:00-2:45 in the counseling office.

1. **Overarching Goal: In group social situations, this group will display improved interpersonal relationships and group interactions. Improvement will be seen in relationships with peers, parents and teachers.** 
   1. **Objective 1: Given one month to complete this objective, the group participants will approach three students during lunch periods in the school cafeteria and initiate one conversation with each. After each interaction, the students will free write in their journal about the experience.**
   2. **Objective 2: Over the course of one quarter, each student will conduct a 40 minute tutor session for an underclassman on a math topic of their choice. The one hour tutor session will be conflict free and demonstrate appropriate interpersonal social skills. The students will display skills that do not belittle the other learner.**
2. **Participation in the social skills group will allow students to be more productive citizens in their future lives. Using data driven analysis to identify students weak in group social skills, the group counseling can improve the quality of social skills possessed by these individuals, helping to make them future integral parts of their communities.**

**Component #2: Research-Supported and Standards-Based Content**

**Title of Session #1: Social Scavenger Hunt (Working Stage)**

**Brief Summary of Session: In this session, clients will view inappropriate social behaviors through the use of film clips. Students will have the opportunity to identify the socially inappropriate behavior, and they should brainstorm a more acceptable social behavior in each situation.**

**Theoretical Orientation: This is a cognitive behavioral approach to counseling. These students struggle with social skills and need to adjust their behavior to appropriate social norms. This therapy is based on changing negative thinking and behaviors and will help those in therapy learn new skills. The cognitive behavioral approach will use modeling and role playing to change behavioral patterns. A solutions based focus will be used to set and meet behavioral goals.**

**Specific Group Technique: The specific group technique used for this session is modeling, shaping, behavior rehearsal, homework and goal setting. These techniques will be used over the course of a school year.**

**Duration:** *45 minutes*

**Materials/ Media:** *Video Clips, Computer, Audio/Visual equipment, Free Write Journals*

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

C.A1.3 Develop an awareness of personal abilities, skills, interests and motivations

C.A2.1 Acquire employability skills such as working on a team, problem-solving and organizational skills

PS.B1.6 Know how to apply conflict resolution skills

PS.B1.4 Develop effective coping skills for dealing with problems

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**

Pennsylvania 12th Grade English Standards:

* + 1. Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations.

1.6.13 Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions*.*

**Objectives:**

1. Clients will identify one socially unacceptable behavior and provide one reason why this behavior is unacceptable in the setting.

1. Clients will develop one alternative behavior that would be more acceptable in the setting provided.
2. Using the exercise as a guide, students will reflect on their behavior for the last week and identify one instance in which their behavior was inappropriate. Students will then identify one way in which they could have improved that behavior. They will write a free write journal entry addressing this topic.

**Assessments**: A free write journaling experience will be included at the end of the session to evaluate what the students have learned about their reactions to difficult group social situations. The students will reflect on their past behavior and propose positive alternatives to that behavior. They will also write about group social skills they feel are being improved because of this session.

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy:**

1. Welcome students to the group and remind students of the group rules. (2 minutes)
2. In a go-around format, ask group members to share one positive social interaction they have had in the past week. (5 minutes)
3. Explain to group members that we will be watching popular television show clips to show situations in which someone acts in a socially inappropriate manner. Explain that after each video clip we will discuss the behaviors that are socially inappropriate. Group members will need to determine what the behavior was, and why the person was acting in that manner. Then, as a group, they must come up with a more appropriate response to the interaction. Complete this process for each video clip. When students pinpoint inappropriate behaviors and possible solutions, record their answers in a T-chart. (15 minutes)
4. Once all video clips are viewed and discussed, show students the Sheldon Cooper: Friends Algorithm video clip. After the clip, students should reflect on the appropriate group behavior concepts that Sheldon is beginning to understand. (7 minutes)
5. Ask students to reflect in a free write in a journal: Can you think of a situation in the past week where you acted inappropriately? Why did you act that way? If you could go back and alter your behavior, how would you act differently? Did you have any instances in which you had successful social interactions? Please detail one successful social interaction. (10 minutes)
6. In a Go-around, ask students to set one social skills goal to work on in the next week. For instance, students could share that they are going to work on not interrupting. (6 minutes)

**Homework/ Ownwork**: *For the next week, students should work on the goal they set in the last go around. Over the course of the quarter, each students should approach one person in the lunchroom and strike up an appropriate conversation while using appropriate body language and conversation skills.*

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues*: Two issues may arise in this group session. First, students may think the video clips are funny, leading them to disregard the activity. While the clips are intended to be funny, they are not intended to derail the activity. Also, some students may be unwilling to discuss reactions to the clips and appropriate responses. In group situations, some students may be reluctant to participate.***

**Title of Session #2: What, What, What Would You Do? (Working Stage)**

**Brief Summary of Session: In this session, group members will use pre-created scenarios to practice socially acceptable group behaviors. They will finish these conversations with an appropriate and socially acceptable response. The group members should also practice using appropriate body language and eye contact. The group will analyze each scenario, pinpointing strengths and weaknesses.**

**Theoretical Orientation: This is a cognitive behavioral approach to counseling. These students struggle with social skills and need to adjust their behavior to appropriate social norms. The cognitive behavioral approach will use modeling and role playing to change behavioral patterns. A solutions based focus will be used to set and meet behavioral goals.**

**Specific Group Technique: The specific group technique used in this session is role play, creation of a list of strengths and positive feedback.**

**Duration:** *45 minutes*

**Materials/ Media:** *Pre-created role play scenarios, poster board for the class poster, markers*

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

*PS.A1.5. Identify and express feelings*

*PS.A1.11 Identify changing personal and social roles*

*PS.A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors*

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**

Pennsylvania State Math Standards: 10th grade

PA.M11.A.1 Demonstrate an understanding of numbers, ways of representing numbers and the numbers system

**Objectives:**

1. **Students will start one conversation using an appropriate greeting and handshake during the course of the session.**
2. **Students will provide one piece of appropriate feedback regarding social interaction.**
3. **Students will provide one math tutoring session with a student of their choice and on a topic of their choice. The session will be conflict free.**

**Assessments**: As a class, we will make a classroom poster listing positive social skills. Students should contribute to the creating of the poster using a group discussion. The poster should be divided into two lists. The first list will describe positive social body language and expressions the students feel they have mastered. The second list will describe skills the students would like to continue developing.

**Procedures/ Instructional Strategy:**

1. **Welcome the students to the group and review the rules of the group session. (2 minutes)**
2. **Ask students to describe one positive social interaction they have had in the past week. Congratulate them on their experiences. (5 minutes)**
3. **Explain to students that we will be participating in role play and feedback exercises for today’s session. Model the exercise for the students using a volunteer. Demonstrate the use of the conversation starter/scenario in order to practice good social skills. (3 minutes)**
4. **Give each group member a scenario they will have to act out with a partner while practicing good social behavior.**
5. **Give students about 5 minutes to practice their scenario. (5 minutes)**
6. **Students will present their scenario in pairs to the group. (10 minutes)**
7. **After each presentation, the group will provide feedback to the presenters. (7 minutes)**
8. **As a group, students will create a class poster describing good social behaviors they have mastered and behaviors they would still like to work on. These behaviors can include body language and social interaction. (10 minutes)**
9. **In a go-around, have each member complement another group member on a positive social action they have displayed. ( 2 minutes)**
10. **Assign students their homework.**

**Homework/ Ownwork**: **Over the course of one quarter, each student will conduct a 40 minute tutor session for an underclassman on a math topic of their choice. The one hour tutor session will be conflict free and demonstrate the practiced interpersonal social skills.**

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues*:*** Resistance may occur in the group sessions in preparing and presenting their social interactions. When students are shy, they may be hesitant to take the stage. It will be extremely important to build group trust, cohesion and support in order to minimize this shyness.

**Component #3: Ethical, Legal, Multicultural**

* 1. **An ethical issue to consider when conducting social skills training sessions is causing psychological harm to participants. Students in the group may feel like they are not progressing as fast as other students. It will be important to constantly reinforce the progress everyone is making in order to avoid psychological harm to participants. It will also be important to consider ethical issues in examining why certain social behaviors are displayed. Perhaps the behaviors stem from some repressed issue of a student’s past. It will be important to protect those students psychologically through the group sessions. Legally, the parents must be notified and consent to their child’s participation in the social skills group. Parents will be provided with a consent form prior to the formation of the group. Students will also consent to participating in this group as the group is based on voluntary participation.**
  2. **Because the group is based on cognitive behavioral therapy, this program will address issues of conflict, prejudice, bias and oppression through questioning techniques that lead to guided discovery. For instance, questions such as, “How do you think it made her feel that you displayed rage because she didn’t agree with your opinion?” This will promote empathy for others. Also, cognitive restructuring will be used to help identify individual behaviors that may be irrational and prejudice or bias in nature. By focusing on modeling and role playing appropriate behaviors, conflict and bias will be minimized by the end of the group therapy sessions.**

**A basic rule of the group setting will be to act in a respectful manner. This includes being sensitive to the feelings of others. Sensitivity to others will be a major focus of the sessions, so cultural sensitivity will improve with each session. Environmental issues will be discussed in determining social behaviors. Addressing environmental factors may help to reduce bias and prejudice.**

* 1. **This group is based on voluntary participation. If a student is feeling discriminated against, oppressed or conflicted, they can feel free to terminate their involvement in the group at any time. The importance of group cohesion will be stressed during the initial phases of the group and attempts to develop group empathy will be made. However, if all therapy techniques fail to create a safe environment for a group member, they may terminate their involvement. The sessions can continue in a one on one format in order to provide cognitive behavioral therapy for the student.**

**Component #4: Program Evaluation**

1. **Student creates a pre-post measure for session #1 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).**
2. **Student creates a pre-post measure for session #2 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).**
3. **The behavioral outcomes are extremely important in evaluating the effectiveness of this program. A variety of methods will be use to assess this program’s effectiveness. First, the attached pre and post test assessments will be given during a variety of sessions. At the terminating session, a social skills analysis test will be given to group participants to identify areas in which improvements were made and areas they will still need to focus on. Also, pre-group session behavior records will be compared with the behavior records collected on year after the sessions were terminated. I anticipate seeing a decrease in behavior incidents after one year of cognitive behavioral therapy. To determine students in need of this program, input was collected from teachers and parents. Data will again be collected regarding the selected students from the same teachers and parents. The responses will be measured against the initial responses. An open comments section will allow subjective responses to reveal behavioral improvements observed from teachers and parents.**

**References (list format at the close of section #4 in Livetext)**

National Association of School Psychologists. (2002). Social Skills Factsheet:<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/socialskills_fs.aspx>

Sarason, Irvin and Sarason, Barbara. (1981). Teaching Cognitive and Social Skills to High School Students. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. 49, 908-918.

*Veronneau, Marie-Helene and Dishion, Thomas. (2011). Middle School Friendships and Academic Achievement in Early Adolescence: A Longitudinal Analysis*. The Journal of Early Adolescence. 3, 99-124.